DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 455 514 CS 217 607

TITLE	I've Just Seen a Face: Portraits. [Lesson Plan].
INSTITUTION	National Endowment for the Humanities (NFAH), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	12p.; Other EDSITEment partners are the Council of the Great City Schools, the WorldCom Foundation, and the National Trust for the Humanities.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://edsitement.neh.gov/lessonplans.html.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Class Activities; *Classroom Techniques; Curriculum Enrichment; *Descriptive Writing; Elementary Education; Learning Activities; Lesson Plans; *Photographs; Student Educational Objectives; United States History; *Visual Learning
IDENTIFIERS	Facial Characteristics; Image Analysis; *Portraits

ABSTRACT

Image has always been important to the powerful. Their portraits have traditionally been designed to impress people with the gravity of the subject, but changing sensibilities and media have tended to introduce more intimacy and spontaneity. Creating visual and literary representations of people has proved to be an enduring human activity. This EDSITEment lesson helps students examine this compulsion to capture the human in image and words. The lesson plan contains guiding questions and material on how to prepare to teach the lesson. It also contains suggested activities for these lessons: Lesson 1: Portraits of Children: Developing Criteria; Lesson 2: Status Portraits: Using the Criteria; Lesson 3: American Portraits in History: Using the Criteria; Lesson 4: Portraits in Pictures and Words; Lesson 5: Subjects and Their Work; Lesson 6: Self-Portraits; and Extending the Lesson. The lesson plan provides detailed information and ideas for teaching each lesson; cites learning objectives; gives appropriate grade levels and approximate length of time required for each lesson; and outlines national standards for social studies, arts, and language arts covered in the lessons. (Lists 7 recommended readings for younger readers, and 18 related Internet links.) (NKA)

ED 455 514

I've Just Seen a Face: Portraits

EDSITEment, a partnership among the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Council of the Great City Schools, the WorldCom Foundation, and the National Trust for the Humanities.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CS217607

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

I've Just Seen a Face: Portraits

Home
Lesson Plans
SEARCH
DISCLAIMER

Introduction

The day the photographer comes to school to take portrait photos is always quite a day, filled with irrepressible excitement and barely suppressed anxiety. When the pictures arrive, they are shared, traded, talked about and sometimes hidden. We are all protective of our own image.

Image has always been important to the powerful. Their portraits have traditionally been designed to impress us with the gravity of the subject. But changing sensibilities and media have tended to introduce more intimacy and spontaneity.

Creating visual and literary representations of people has proven to be an enduring human activity. Help your students examine this compulsion of ours to capture the human in image and words.

Guiding Questions: What differences in portraits can students observe? What image of the individual do portraits convey to the students? What kinds of portraits have been made of historical figures?

Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Cite at least three purposes a portrait can serve.
- List criteria for analyzing the image a portrait projects.
- Analyze a portrait of an historical figure based on the criteria.
- Relate biographical research to a portrait.

Preparing to Teach This Lesson

Review the lesson plan. The first three lessons comprise a unit in which students develop criteria for looking at portraits. In the culminating lesson, students use a portrait of a famous American and their own research to make a presentation to the class. The rubric provided at the end of this unit can be used to evaluate students' presentations, or as a model for designing your own rubric.

The first three lessons should fit well into a biography unit or a study of a particular period of American history. Many examples of portraits are offered, but you can also use EDSITEment resources to locate additional portraits to fit your curriculum.

For Lesson 1, ask volunteers to bring in some of their school pictures from the past.

In preparation for Lesson 2, type the list of criteria the students developed. As the students make further refinements, update the list when practical.

SUBJECT AREAS

Literature/Poetry

History/US

Art/Visual Arts

GRADE LEVELS

3-5

TIME REQUIRED

Lesson 1: 1 class period
Lesson 2: 1 class period
Lesson 3: 1 class period for looking at portraits; additional time required for research and presentations
Lesson 4: 1 class period
Lesson 5: 1 class period
Lesson 6: 1 class period for setting up the project, time will vary for the creation of portraits depending on the specific assignment

SKILLS

- **devising and applying criteria for analysis**
- **modifying criteria based on new evidence**
- **critical thinking**
- **comparison and contrast**

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

National Council for the Social Studies

2. Time, Continuity, and Change (more)

Standards for Arts Education

4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures. (more)
5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Lessons 4-6 are designed to stand alone. Use them after students have experience with portraits and then whenever it best suits your class. Lesson 4 helps your students write portraits in poetry. Lesson 5 can serve as an introduction to a careers unit. Lesson 6 encourages students to make self-portraits. Your students might enjoy this activity at the end of the year to create a simple yearbook.

Download and duplicate as necessary any materials you will use. Choose from the images listed or use the resources listed at the end of this unit to search for your own. If possible, print at least one color copy of color images; if that is not possible, bookmark chosen portraits on an accessible computer for easy viewing.

In this unit, students develop and work with their own criteria for analyzing portraits. Every analysis should begin with observations. Make sure the student criteria can change as new ideas arise. A set of portrait analysis criteria based on those developed by an art historian is included with this lesson (click here to download a PDF version of these criteria). The criteria can inform your leadership of discussions with the students.

Additional document analysis resources:

- If desired, a model set of criteria for Reading a Photograph is available from the EDSITEment resource Harlem 1900-1940: An African-American Community.
- The "Education" section at the EDSITEment-reviewed National Portrait Gallery has a marvelous collection of teacher's packets full of ideas for examining several genres of visual representation.
- The EDSITEment-reviewed The Digital Classroom offers a series of worksheets for analyzing primary source documents, including a photograph analysis worksheet, that you may wish to use or adapt to help students develop criteria for analyzing portraits.

Suggested Activities

Lesson 1: Portraits of Children: Developing Criteria
Lesson 2: Status Portraits: Using the Criteria
Lesson 3: Americans Portraits in History: Using the Criteria

Additional Activities:
Lesson 4: Portraits in Pictures and Words
Lesson 5: Subjects and Their Work
Lesson 6: Self-portraits

Extending the Lesson

LESSON 1

Portraits of Children

Briefly share and discuss some portraits of students taken as school photos. Why are these pictures taken every year? Why do some students dress up for these portraits while others choose to be photographed looking as they do every day? Why do some students (or their parents) purchase pictures? What do they do with them? If they are given to relatives and friends and kept by parents, what image of the student are such people hoping the picture will project? (In other words, some would be disappointed if the picture showed the student doing something silly. On the other hand, they don't want the picture portraying the student in some artificially serious pose, either.)

merits of their work and the work of others. (more)
6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines. (more)

NCTE/IRA List of Standards for the English Language Arts
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. (more)
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts. (more)

View your state's standards

In this lesson, students will try to analyze what image of the children is being projected in some archival portraits.

Students may be surprised to learn that portraits of children have been made for hundreds of years. After looking at students' school photos, share some examples of portraits of children with the class. The following list presents samples you can use, listed in chronological order (all available through the EDSITEment-reviewed website of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City):

- *Portrait of a Boy*, Egyptian 2nd century C.E.; Roman period.
  Background information and small image
  Larger image

- *Portrait of a Boy With a Falcon*, Wallerant Vaillant (Flemish, 1623-1677).
  Background information and small image
  Larger image

In addition to these portraits, show students a photo of Miss Grace Wagner, a student at Central High in Washington, D.C. learning the art of auto mechanics (1927).

As students discuss the portrait(s) you select, work with them to develop a list of criteria for analyzing or judging the image a portrait projects. Students might discuss such characteristics as the posture of the subject, the subject's clothing, objects in the photo, the subject's expression. (Note: A set of portrait analysis criteria based on those developed by an art historian is included with this lesson; click here to download in PDF format. Download Adobe Acrobat Reader®)

Distribute copies of an appropriate number of the following portraits so about three to five students, working individually, are looking at the same image. (Assign a number to each portrait to help the students form groups later.)

- A child holding a baby alligator, Oklawaha River, Florida, from the EDSITEment resource American Memory

- Boy with issue of Saturday Evening Post; to find this image, search by title in the EDSITEment resource American Memory.

- Cajun girl near Crowley, La., available from American Memory

- Child on horseback, available through a link from American Memory

- Daniel Crommelin Verplanck, 1771: Background information and small image or larger image available from the EDSITEment resource The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Explore and Learn.

- Girl with Flower, available through a link from American Memory

- Navajo Captive, available through a link from American Memory

- Paiute Indian Girl with Doll in Cradleboard, available through a link from American Memory

- Portrait of a Girl and Her Horse, available from American Memory

- Portrait of boy soldier, available from American Memory

- Santa Clara Indian, available from American Memory
- Unidentified Indian child, Crow, seated, full length, available from American Memory

Students will use the criteria they developed in the previous discussion as a guide for assessing the portrait. Then, each student should write a caption regarding the characteristics of the subject in the assigned portrait. Next, students gather with others who looked at the same portrait to share their captions and compare and contrast their assessment of the subject. If desired, a presenter can be assigned from each group to share a composite of the group's reaction to the portrait.

LESSON 2

The Good, the Bad and ...
Status in Portraits

Why would an important person want a portrait of him or herself? Portraits can help project an image of high status for the subject. But, portraits can also deflate that status. This lesson focuses on the image a portrait conveys.

Begin by passing out a list of the criteria the students designed for looking at a portrait. Review the criteria.

The following list of possible images, organized in alphabetical order, represents portraits of famous Americans who were selected because students are unlikely to recognize them. Distribute an appropriate number of portraits. Working individually, in pairs or in small groups, students analyze one of the portraits below (or any the teacher finds) by applying their own criteria. Students are to hypothesize about the person (status, wealth, place in history and so on) and the portrait's purpose (meant to elevate the subject's status, to deflate the subject's status, unbiased, etc.).

(Note: All of the portraits below are available through the EDSITEment-reviewed website National Portrait Gallery unless otherwise noted.)

- A studio portrait of Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt "Baby Doe" Tabor, wife of millionaire Horace Tabor; she wears a fur coat and hat, and is dusted with fake snow (available from American Memory).
- Caricature of President Truman by political cartoonist John Chase. A small image with information and a full-page image are available from American Memory.
- John Brown led a revolt in Harper's Ferry, Virginia, to end slavery by force; background information.
- John Calhoun, an eloquent U.S. senator with a reputation for having an explosive temper, believed strongly in the South's right to continue slavery; background information.
- Joseph Cinque led the Amistad Slave Mutiny; background information.
- General George A. Custer became a national hero after his death, despite his military blunders, at least in part due to images like the one provided here (available from American Memory). Background information available from the EDSITEment-reviewed New

Perspectives on the West.

- Jesse and Frank James wear suits and pose with revolvers in this studio portrait created between 1866 and 1876 (available from American Memory).

After students offer their hypotheses, reveal the identities of the subjects, providing background information to help students evaluate their hypotheses.

Now, for fun, your students might enjoy creating portraits designed to project a particular image. Group students in pairs. Each student creates a portrait of his/her partner intended to project an image the subject chooses. This portrait can be a drawing, photograph or poem. Each student then writes a brief "biography" of his/her partner explaining the image. (For example, Bill might want to be portrayed in soccer gear, scoring a goal. The biography would discuss Bill's soccer career.)

LESSON 3

American Portraits in History

Throughout this unit, students have used their own pre-determined criteria to analyze various portraits and hypothesize information about the subject. Now, students will research a famous American for whom they also have a portrait.

Begin by conducting a model discussion of a portrait of an American with whom the students are familiar. For example, analyze, as a class, a portrait of Thomas Jefferson created when he was President. (The portrait is available from the EDSITEment-reviewed American Memory, with background information available from the National Portrait Gallery, also reviewed by EDSITEment.)

Have students use the class criteria to guide the discussion. Make sure students look carefully at the objects in the image: a copy of the Declaration of Independence, a bust of Benjamin Franklin, a globe and an electrostatic generator. What do these indicate about Jefferson's life and interests?

Once you feel confident the students understand the analysis process, assign each student (or small groups) a portrait of a famous American and have students research the biography of their portrait subject. Students are to deliver a presentation or write a brief report tying the portrait to the subject's biography.

The following list contains examples of the range of portraits of famous Americans available through EDSITEment resources. Use them to access additional portraits to fit such themes as biography, American Revolution, Presidents, First Ladies, Famous American Women, Civil War, Native Americans, Black History, The Twentieth Century, and many more.

- George Washington Carver with background information, both available from the EDSITEment resource National Portrait Gallery.
- High-resolution head-and-shoulders portrait of President Bill Clinton from the EDSITEment resource American Memory.
- Candid photograph of Clinton, from the EDSITEment resource American President, reveals how the burdens of decision-making weigh heavily on President Clinton.

- Sculpture bust of President Clinton, from National Portrait Gallery can be viewed by scrolling down in the left navigational bar to "William J. Clinton" and clicking on the link.
- Albert Einstein, one of the most influential scientists of the 20th century, from National Portrait Gallery.
- Benjamin Franklin portrayed with symbols of his scientific achievements (oil on canvas, 1762, by Mason Chamberlin), available from National Portrait Gallery.
- Geronimo led Apache tribes in land wars with both the Mexican and U.S. armies; larger image (portraits available from National Portrait Gallery).
- Rosa Parks was arrested for civil disobedience when she refused to relinquish her seat on an Alabama bus to a white passenger in 1955; background information.
- Georgia O' Keefe, a 20th-century American painter, available from the EDSITEment resource Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Edgar Allen Poe, 19th-century American writer; background information.
- Sequoyah (1770?-1843) developed a Cherokee alphabet and encouraged the printing of books and a newspaper in Cherokee.
- General William Tecumsah Sherman, the Union general most known for his "March to the Sea."
- Frank Sinatra, 20th-century American entertainer; background information.
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a leader of the American suffragist movement; background information.
- Harriet Tubman, former slave and a leader of the American abolitionist movement; background information.
- George Washington, scientist and inventor: large image or smaller image with background information.
- George Washington Crossing the Delaware: large image or smaller image with background information

LESSON 4

Portraits in Pictures and Words

Words can "paint" a portrait. The following poems, available through the EDSITEment-reviewed The Academy of American Poets, effectively use language to create an image of the subject:

- "Super Samson Simpson" by Jack Prelutsky
- "Bloody Bill" by Dennis Lee
- "As Soon as Fred Gets Out of Bed" by Jack Prelutsky
- "Last Night I Dreamed of Chickens" by Jack Prelutsky

Using a portrait poem appropriate to the class, attempt an analysis using the students' criteria for graphic portraits. In what ways do they apply? In what ways do they not apply?

Using Prelutsky's "Super Samson Simpson" as an example, here are some lines that might apply to the criteria:

Criteria:	**Line:**
the subject's position	"my grandma carries me"
the subject's expression	"My muscles are enormous / they bulge from top to toe"
objects in the portrait	"I like to carry elephants ... I pick up half a dozen / and hoist them in the air"

"Bloody Bill" presents a portrait of a character, Bloody Bill, created by the narrator. The pirate is described colorfully enough that students could draw his picture: "Bloody Bill / Was marching up the sidewalk / On the old Spadina Hill ... He had a sort of eye-patch ... He wore a bloody dagger / In his muddy, bloody belt." The poem also serves as a portrait of the narrator, who uses the story of Bloody Bill to avoid a fight.

"As Soon as Fred Gets Out of Bed" also works as a portrait (albeit a bit silly looking portrait): "But near his ears, above his brains / is where Fred's underwear remains."

A poem can also do, directly, what a portrait can only do indirectly—that is to take the reader into the mind of the subject. For example, "Last Night I Dreamed of Chickens" describes a child's dream.

After reviewing some of the ways poems can create portraits, your students can create their own poetic portraits. Some simple forms work particularly well for portrait poems. The cinquain, a five-line form, can be constructed as follows:

Line 1: a one-word topic, such as the subject's name (noun)
Line 2: two describing words (adjectives)
Line 3: three action words (verbs)
Line 4: a four-word phrase
Line 5: a synonym or equivalent for the topic

Students also could create poems to serve as captions for a gallery of portraits suited to a unit of study (a study of U.S. presidents, for example) that are available on various EDSITEment-reviewed websites. The couplet-a verse composed of two lines, usually rhyming-might be an appropriate form for students to use with this assignment. Students might also want to draw or paint portraits to accompany their poems.

LESSON 5

Portraits of People at Work

Why are so many portraits created of people with their work? Like the boy painted with his pet falcon in Lesson #1, objects in a photograph can help convey information. How do the objects in the following samples add to the images these photographs project?

- He Mined for Gold; background information.
- Milliner and Daughter (c. 1854)

- Harry Houdini, magician: Image and background information
- Portrait of Dizzy Gillespie, musician, available through the EDSITEment-reviewed American Memory; background information.
- Postman loaded with mail waiting for streetcar (1939) Streetcar terminal, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. To find this image, search for the title in the EDSITEment-reviewed American Memory.
- Wilt Chamberlain wears the uniform of the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team in this three-quarter length portrait found on American Memory.

Students can create a gallery of portraits of subjects and their work to accompany a unit on careers or to report on jobs in a given place or historical era.

LESSON 6

Self-portraits

When you create a portrait of yourself, you can project any image you choose. What personal image was each of the following artists trying to project in creating their self-portraits? Why don't artists always create flattering portraits of themselves? (Note: All of these portraits, except for Robert Cornelius, are accessible on the EDSITEment-reviewed Metropolitan Museum of Art website.)

- Robert Cornelius, *The Earliest Known American Photograph* (1839): small image with background information and larger image available from The Library of Congress, a link from American Memory.
- Mary Cassatt, *Portrait of the Artist* (1878) available from the EDSITEment resource Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Andy Warhol, *Last Self-Portrait* (1986) and background information available from Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Now, each student can design a portrait to project a self-chosen image. Using a camera or digital camera would be a great way of creating the portraits. An exhibition (on a bulletin board or the computer) with appropriate captions can be mounted. You may wish to work collaboratively with your school's art instructor on this project.

Extending the Lesson

- If appropriate technology is available, assign small groups of students to find and download portraits related to relevant historical events, and to label them with bibliographic information and historical analysis. For example, portraits could be used to create a picture book about important personalities involved with an historical event being studied in class.
- Have students conduct research on the history of photography, including the daguerreotype process, and how changes in the technology over time affected the potential content of photographs.
- Encourage students to use portraits to trace social and cultural changes through time, such as in military uniforms or high-society

fashions.

- Assign students to gather and analyze a variety of portraits of one individual, such as a political leader, artist or scientist, to reveal how that person's image changed over time. These images of Abraham Lincoln—starting before he had a beard, to shortly before his death—make a good case in point:

  Lincoln without a beard (c. 1860), available through the EDSITEment resource American Memory.

  The first photo of Lincoln with a beard (1860), available from the EDSITEment resource The American President.

  President Lincoln the last week of his life (1865), available through American Memory.

Recommended Readings for Younger Readers, from the Library of Congress's Learning Page:

- Butterfield, Moira and Susan Peach. *Photography*. London: Usborne Publishing, 1991.
- Freedman, Russell. *Lincoln: A Photobiography*. N.Y.: Clarion, 1987.
- Lowe, Jacques. *Looking at Photographs: People*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1996.
- Meredith, Roy. *Mr. Lincoln's Camera Man: Mathew B. Brady*. N.Y.: Dover, 1974.
- Sullivan, George. *Mathew Brady: His Life and Photographs*. N.Y.: Cobblehill Books, 1994.
- Turner, Robyn. *Dorthea Lange*. Boston.: Little, Brown & Company, 1994.

Additional Recommended Reading:

- King, Penny and Roundhill, Clare. *Portraits (Artist's Workshop)*. N.Y.: Crabtree Publishers, 1996.

Links to EDSITEment Participating Websites

The Metropolitan Museum of Art
http://www.metmuseum.org/home.asp

American Memory
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amhome.html

By Popular Demand: Portraits of the Presidents and First Ladies
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/odmdhtml/preshome.html
Creative American Portraits by Carl Van Vechten
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/vvhtml/vvhome.html
Daguerreotype Portraits and Views
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/daghtml/daghome.html

Library of Congress Exhibits
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/

America's Library
http://www.americaslibrary.gov

The American President
http://www.americanpresident.org/home6.htm

Detroit Institute of Art
http://www.dia.org/exhibitions/vangogh/vangogh.html

Digital Classroom
http://www.nara.gov/education/

Harlem 1900-1940: An African-American Community
http://www.si.umich.edu/CHICO/Harlem

National Portrait Gallery
http://www.npg.si.edu/

A Brush with History
http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/brush/index1.htm
Matthew Brady's Portraits
http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/brady/index.htm
Portraits of the Presidents
http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/travpres/index.htm
Selections from Past Exhibits
http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/past.htm

New Perspectives on the West
http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/

People in the West and *Archives of the West* contain portraits of and background information on many important historical figures and ordinary folk.

Western History: The Photography Collection
http://gowest.coalliance.org/